



## INTEGRATED STIMULUS PACKAGE TO IMPROVE RESILIENCE (INSPIRE)

### SECOND QUARTER REPORT (January 2014- March 2014)

Applicant Organization Name: Mercy Corps	
Headquarters Contact Information Contact Person: Steve Zodrow Title: Senior Program Officer Address: 45 SW Ankeny Street Portland, OR 97204 Telephone: 503 896 5729 Email: <a href="mailto:szodrow@mercycorps.org">szodrow@mercycorps.org</a>	Field Contact Information Contact Person: Mathieu Rouquette Title: Country Director, South Sudan Address: Tomping, Juba Juba, South Sudan Telephone: +211 912 724 445 Email: <a href="mailto:mrouquette@ss.mercy Corps.org">mrouquette@ss.mercy Corps.org</a>
<b>Program Summary</b>  <b>Award No: AID-OFDA-G-14-00002</b>  <b>Start Date: November 01, 2013</b>  <b>End Date: October 31, 2015</b>  <b>Report Date: April 30, 2014</b>	



**An elderly and others receiving money under cash transfer in Agok**

## **Overview of implementation period**

During the period under review, the INSPIRE program had a full quarter of program implementation after the program launched in November 2013 and the initial reporting period only having covered the first two months. During the period under review, the crisis that started on December 15<sup>th</sup> had a profound effect on the program and the humanitarian situation especially in Unity State. During the period, although relative calm had been restored in some areas of Unity State, more than 240,800 still remain as IDPs while AAA is the home for 2,600 IDPs. Rumors and counter accusations from both government and anti-government have continued with high tension. People still continue to stay in protection of civilian (PoC) areas with the humanitarian situation extremely severe and the needs are huge.

The Abyei Administration Area, although peaceful and less affected by the unrest, has pockets of insecurity especially in the area north of River Kiir where people were killed by suspected Misseriyas tribesman. Furthermore, during the period, UNISFA repulsed a group of militants that were on a suspected mission to attack Abyei town again on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March. This affected movement in areas north of the river but overall AAA has been calm with UNISFA's assurance of security in the area.

Nevertheless, with the insecurity in Unity State, there is a high possibility that the population will not be able to engage in productive farming and other activities which will most likely worsen the humanitarian situation beyond 2014 and create more needs into 2015 if the population is not productive. Furthermore, any unrest in Unity State has a direct impact on the population in AAA with increased IDPs.

For INSPIRE program, this will have a profound effect on both the AFS and ERMS components of the program.

Programmatically, due to insecurity, the program has mainly been implemented in AAA. With a fully constituted team, all activities including cash based programs have smoothly kicked off while agriculture related activities, largely seed fairs, have been initiated with identification of input dealers which is the first step to ensure inputs are available. Details of the activities that were implemented by sector are provided below.

### **1.1 IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION/FOOD SECURITY**

#### **1.1.1. Selection, Identification, and Registration of 2,000 HHs in AAA and Unity**

Selection and identification of beneficiaries continued through the reporting period. Mercy Corps' INSPIRE team worked with village committees and chiefs to ensure eligible beneficiaries are selected in AAA. Currently all cash transfer beneficiaries have been selected and majority of cash for work beneficiaries in AAA. However, this has been affected by the crisis in Unity State without any cash for work beneficiaries identified at this stage.

### **1.1.2. Entrepreneurship support to thirty traders (20 seed vendors and 10 blacksmiths) in business growth and technical knowledge**

The INSPIRE team identified vendors and blacksmiths for support under this sector in AAA. However, most of the vendors didn't seem to be actively involved in seed trade currently which raised fear within the team that such vendors may only target support and fail to meet the program objective afterwards. Currently the team is working with RRC and Ministry of Agriculture to screen more vendors who will meet the program selection criteria beyond the program life in AAA. Similarly blacksmiths so far identified in AAA were not taking this trade seriously. This has hampered the team from advancing grants to such vendors who may not be interested beyond the program life. However, working with the Ministry of Agriculture the program is widening the scope to markets in the neighboring Twic County with vendors and traders that can support the market in AAA with possibility of support to such blacksmiths.

### **1.1.3. Re-constitution of agricultural assets (seeds and tools) for 1,500 households in Unity and AAA through Agro Seed Fairs and animal assets (goats) to 500 households in Unity and AAA**

During the reporting period, Mercy Corps' INSPIRE team working with the Ministry of Agriculture and RRC identified the farmers' union in AAA to supply seeds during the seed fair and blacksmiths in Twic for AAA. MOUs are planned to be signed for supplying seeds and tools during the seed fair in AAA. This activity has not started in Unity State due to the crisis in the area.

### **1.1.4. Agronomy and agro forestry training for 100 lead farmers in AAA and Unity State**

This activity will be undertaken after the seed fairs within the next reporting period.

### **1.1.5. Tree nursery and horticulture cash grants (co-investments) to thirty producers/ groups (15 AAA, 15 Unity)**

This activity has been temporary halted pending final decision on the modification to this grant.

## **ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND MARKET SYSTEMS**

### **2.1. TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT**

#### **2.1.2. Cash Transfer for 500 most vulnerable households at US\$40 per household per month for four months in Unity State and AAA**

As reported during the previous reporting period and under activity 1.1.1; 500 extremely vulnerable households were successfully selected and within the reporting period and received the first cash transfer of 128 SSP (USD 40). These include both AAA beneficiaries and IDPs from Unity whom the program team followed being present in AAA for cash transfer. Subsequent transfers are expected within the next reporting with the activity well on track.

### **2.1.3. 1,500 households participate in 20 cash for work projects for a period of 4 months in AAA and Unity State (3-5 CFW projects will be started in February while monitoring of the markets continues)**

During the period under review CFW projects were submitted to OFDA for AAA and approved. Subsequently three cash for work projects were started in Muli muli, Wunwork and Rumamamer with 250 beneficiaries to work for 22 days. More cash for projects will be started within the next reporting period. This has not been possible in Unity State due to the crisis.

## **2.2. LIVELIHOODS RESTORATION**

### **2.2.1. 2-day business training modules for 80 businesses on ‘Start and Improve Your Own Business’ across the AAA and Unity State**

Mercy Corps has identified 15 traders who will receive the SIYB training before the cash grant is disbursed. Other VSLA and small traders will also be trained within the next reporting period.

### **2.2.2. Entrepreneurship support to thirty traders for bulk procurement in AAA and Unity State**

Related to the above, in AAA, the INSPIRE team has identified traders for trader grants and verification started within the reporting period which will end during the next period and grants disbursed. This is only limited to AAA with Unity State still remaining insecure.

### **2.2.3. Enable livelihoods skills development for thirty youth through apprenticeships**

This activity is planned for the period between June and October, however, with the proposed modification this activity may be halted up to the second year.

## **2.4. MICROFINANCE**

### **2.4.1. Mobilize the formation of 60 VSLA groups of approximately 25 members each, in Unity State and the AAA**

During the reporting period, 15 new groups have been mobilized with even older groups trained under ECAP still seeking for support from the program. More groups will be formed during the next reporting period in AAA.

Beneficiaries working on different cash for work projects have indicated willingness to start their own VSLAs while other business community members have also continued to seek support to start up their own VSLA groups.

### **2.4.2. Provide initial 3-day training per group and VSLA materials**

During the period under review, 10 new groups received 3-day training giving for a total of 236 members in AAA. During the trainings, members came up with their own constitution, elected their leaders (Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary) and agreed on their share value, loaning dynamics in relation to share capital, repayment, and social fund which were all incorporated in the constitution. Mercy Corps provided 10 of the groups who completed the training with VSLA materials, and all groups

have commenced their savings for the first loan cycle. Provision of VSL materials will continue in the next reporting period.

#### **2.4.3. Data collection and follow up**

Data collection is part of Mercy Corps routine follow-up which also helps the groups especially in infancy to stabilize. INSPIRE monitors group savings and loans on a weekly basis and provides refresher trainings and / or support on an ongoing basis. Mercy Corps is also supporting share out of VSLA dividends earned in 2012 – 2013 under the OFDA funded ECAP.

Across the ten new groups, 9728 SSP (USD \$3040) has been saved and loaned so far within members. And, a net social fund of 174 SSP (USD \$54) has been established.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

Although the program was interrupted due to the crisis, after relative calm experienced during the period under review in AAA, INSPIRE has gained considerable momentum. However, in Unity State program implementation has continued to be disrupted by the crisis. Concerns that had been raised about the potential for markets to support cash based programs. After conducting a Rapid Assessment Market (RAM), it was found that although commodity prices had gone up by 25%, they could still sustain cash based programs. This provided the impetus to continue with ERMS activities of the program. Furthermore, an Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) which was under taken in AAA provided more insight and cemented the potential for cash based programs. Unity State however has continued to be in a crisis state and the need for lifesaving and emergency interventions. To this, Mercy Corps has submitted a proposal requesting for modification within the current INSPIRE grant to include lifesaving and emergency components within the program to cater to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Unity State.